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## INFORMATION INSIDE

### Florida's New Tax Deduction and an Update on Hurricane Recovery

## How to Contact Tom Feeney

Visit Congressman Feeney's website to find out the latest information on what the Congressman is doing in Washington and around the 24th District. The site also provides information on:

- Tracking legislation in Congress**
- Obtaining Congressional assistance when dealing with federal agencies**
- Educational opportunities for students**
- Obtaining flags flown over the U.S. Capitol**
- Arranging tours of the Capitol and other points of interest**



[www.house.gov/feeney](http://www.house.gov/feeney)

#### Orlando Office:

12424 Research Pkwy  
Suite 135  
Orlando, FL 32826  
phone: (407) 208-1106  
fax: (407) 208-1108

#### Port Orange Office:

1000 City Center Circle,  
2nd Floor  
Port Orange FL 32129  
phone: (386) 756-9798  
fax: (386) 756-9903

#### Titusville Office:

400 South Street, Suite 4A  
Titusville FL 32780  
phone: (321) 264-6113  
fax: (321) 264-6227

#### D.C. Office:

323 Cannon  
House Office Building  
Washington DC 20515  
phone: (202) 225-2706  
fax: (202) 226-6299

[tom.feeney@mail.house.gov](mailto:tom.feeney@mail.house.gov)

# 2004

## *Annual Report from*



**Congressman**  
**Tom Feeney**

## **New Tax Deduction for Floridians**

**Beginning this year, Florida taxpayers can treat sales tax payments as an itemized deduction for federal income tax purposes.**

A new tax law passed by Congress corrects an inequity -- dating back to 1986 -- where taxpayers could deduct state income tax but not state sales tax payments, thereby discriminating against Floridians who don't pay state income taxes. When I entered Congress in January 2003, I immediately began working to obtain equal treatment for Floridians. So I teamed up with other Members of Congress from states without state income taxes to restore this sales tax deduction. After much legislative maneuvering, we achieved success.

### **Now, a taxpayer can deduct:**

- (1) the amount of sales tax paid as demonstrated by receipts or**
- (2) a standard sales tax deduction (based on the taxpayer's number of dependents and adjusted gross taxable income) found in an IRS-provided table plus sales tax paid on the purchase of boats or motor vehicles.**

Many Florida families will save several hundred dollars in income taxes, especially if you make big ticket purchases on items like cars or boats. The Congressional Research Service estimates that \$1.3 billion will stay in Florida taxpayer's pockets instead of going to Uncle Sam.

This new provision is part of the America Jobs Creation Act passed by Congress and signed by the President in October.

# Hurricane Relief Update

Following the devastating hurricanes this summer, Congress approved two emergency funding measures that provided \$15 billion in disaster relief. Some highlights of the funding include:

- Over \$8 billion to FEMA for direct assistance to individuals and families, paying for debris removal and utility and infrastructure repairs, and emergency food and shelter.
- \$925 million for the Small Business Administration (SBA) to help fund nearly \$5.5 billion in low interest loans to individuals and businesses.
- \$800 million to help repair highways and roads damaged by the storms.
- \$126 million to NASA to repair damaged buildings and communications systems and provide temporary work spaces.
- \$121 million to the Department of Veterans Affairs to repair facilities.

If you think you are eligible to receive emergency funds, please contact one of FEMA's local centers. If you are having trouble with your claim or have questions about the process, my district office may be able to assist you.

- **Check on the status of FEMA requests**
- **Provide information about SBA loans**
- **Provide information about flood insurance**

If you are thinking about applying for assistance, act quickly  
THE DEADLINE FOR APPLYING FOR FEMA AID IS DECEMBER 31

If you have received a denial letter from FEMA, you can appeal  
and may need to provide more information about your claim.

## District 24 Disaster Relief Information

**FEMA: 800-621-FEMA**

### Local information

Brevard County  
**321-633-1770**

Miracle City Mall Parking Lot  
2500 S. Washington Ave  
Titusville, FL 32780

Seminole County  
**407-665-5131**

Strip Mall  
1491 East SR 434 - Suites 103 & 104  
Winter Springs, FL 32708

Orange County  
**407-836-9151**

Nicor Building  
1602 Goldenrod Drive  
Orlando, FL 32807

Volusia County  
**386-258-4088**

Sunshine Park Mall  
2400 South Ridgewood Avenue  
South Daytona, FL 32119

# The FEENEY AMENDMENT

## Protecting Sentencing Guidelines

In the 108th Congress I led efforts to defend our children when I introduced and passed an amendment to the PROTECT Act. The amendment, which applies specifically to federal criminal cases involving kidnapping, violence against children, or other crimes sexual in nature, makes it harder for federal judges to issue sentences below those called for in the federal sentencing guidelines for these heinous crimes.



## Preparing NASA for the Future

As a supporter of America's Vision for Space Exploration, I am pleased to report that Congress has fully funded NASA's budget request for 2005. This funding will be critical in returning the Space Shuttle to flight, completing the International Space Station and pursuing an ambitious agenda for exploration of the Moon, Mars, and beyond. I am committed to seeing Central Florida remain home of America's human space program and an international leader in developing aerospace technology.

## Protecting the Constitution

Recently, some members of the Supreme Court have begun to base their decisions on foreign laws and constitutions. This year I introduced the *Reaffirmation of American Independence Resolution* to address this problem by affirming the sense of Congress that judicial decisions should not be based on any foreign laws, court decisions, or pronouncements of foreign governments unless they are expressly approved by Congress.

## Washington Waste Watchers

In Congress I co-founded the Washington Waste Watchers, a Congressional working group to combat waste, fraud, and abuse in the federal government.

The Waste Watchers are committed to finding and eliminating government waste, and fighting for responsible spending of your tax dollars. The group introduced legislation to control waste and publicized egregious examples of fraud and abuse involving federal funds.



## Beach Walk Completed

This year, I walked the entire coastline of Florida's 24th Congressional District. Along the 75 mile walking town hall meeting, I met with many constituents, community leaders, and government officials. Our meetings provided me with firsthand knowledge of many of the issues facing our community.

Complete coverage of the Beach Walk, including maps, photos and daily journals, is available at: [www.house.gov/feeney/beachwalk](http://www.house.gov/feeney/beachwalk)

